

Language and Writing Assessment Form E

This assessment is intended to assist Thompson Rivers University, Open Learning (TRU-OL) to recommend the TRU-OL English course best suited to your needs. It is not a test. Complete and submit the assessment to TRU-OL.

NAME	PHONE
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STREET ADDRESS

CITY / PROVINCE / POSTAL CODE

EMAIL ADDRESS

ENGLISH IS MY FIRST LANGUAGE YES NO

PLACE (INSTITUTION) I COMPLETED MY LAST ENGLISH COURSE	DATE COMPLETED
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LEVEL OF LAST ENGLISH COURSE COMPLETED	GRADE OBTAINED
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MY EDUCATIONAL GOALS (WHY I WANT TO REGISTER IN A TRU-OL ENGLISH COURSE)

TRU-OL USE: RESULTS WILL BE FORWARDED USING THIS FORM

PART I (ENGLISH USAGE)	MARK OUT OF 10
PART II (SENTENCE STRUCTURE)	MARK OUT OF 5
PART III (PUNCTUATION)	MARK OUT OF 5
PART IV (READING COMPREHENSION)	MARK OUT OF 12
PART V (EXPOSITORY ESSAY)	LEVEL
PART VI (BUSINESS LETTER)	LEVEL
RECOMMENDATION	

DIRECTIONS

- There is no time limit. You need not complete the assessment in one block of time.
- You may wish to use a pencil to make changes more easily.
- Please attempt to complete all parts of the assessment. Even if you are not familiar with the terminology used to describe English grammar, you may recognize the errors in the sentences in Parts I and II.
- **It is important that you complete Parts V and VI**, with the writing samples. Without your writing samples, we will not be able to recommend a course for you. Please supply your own paper for Parts V and VI. Make sure you put your name on your writing samples.
- Mail the completed assessment to:

Thompson Rivers University, Open Learning
Tutor Support
BC Centre for Open Learning, 4th Floor
Box 3010, 900 McGill Road
Kamloops, BC
Canada V2C 5N3

You may expect results in approximately two weeks.

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PART I: ENGLISH USAGE

Instructions

Nine of the ten sentences below have **one** error in English usage. Place an **X** beneath the underlined segment that contains the error. If a sentence is correct, circle the sentence number.

1. He did not know that he had attempted an impossible when he set out to build himself a boat.
2. Its not difficult to learn to ride a horse if it is gentle and responsive to commands.
3. According to a magazine I was reading, soccer is one of the most popular spectator sport in the world.
4. The volunteers who were searching for the lost child spreaded out across the hillside where he had last been seen.
5. If she hadn't loss her textbook, she would have done much better on the exam.
6. At the banquet they served fish, though I would much rather prefer chicken or steak.
7. When I was young, I was lucky enough to have had the opportunity to work with my father.
8. If she had of been a bit more friendly, I think I would have asked her to the party tonight.
9. The character in this story displays a caring in that he offered to help find his friend a job.
10. There was no reply to my letter so I resolved myself to the fact that I must have had the wrong address.

PART II: SENTENCE STRUCTURE

Instructions

Four of the five sentences found below contain **one** error in sentence structure, such as:

- An incomplete sentence
- A dangling or misplaced modifier
- A faulty or ambiguous reference of a pronoun
- An incomplete comparison, or
- Faulty parallel structure

Place an **X** beneath the underlined segment that contains the error. If a sentence is correct, circle the sentence number.

1. When the fire alarm sounded, he jumped up suddenly, hit his knee against the table and broke it.
2. You won't find essay writing so hard once you discover what is expected and having had more practice in writing compositions.
3. Standing by a fruit stall, a dusty, and battered Volkswagen drove up and a man in cut-off jeans got out.
4. I realize now that when the time comes for me to support myself, my style of living will not be as luxurious as my parents.
5. As I have often told him, most of the problems he has had to face in his life are the result of his own mistakes.

PART III: PUNCTUATION

Instructions

In each group of three sentences below, **one** is punctuated **correctly**, while the other two contain punctuation errors. Place an **X** to the left of the **one** sentence that is **correctly** punctuated.

GROUP 1

The call came in about ten o'clock on Saturday night, two villagers were lost on the mountain and we would have to go to look for them.

The call came in about ten o'clock on Saturday night; two villagers were lost on the mountain and we would have to go to look for them.

The call came in about ten o'clock on Saturday night, two villagers were lost on the mountain, and we would have to go to look for them.

GROUP 2

The part of Canada which he likes best is the North, but he seldom gets a chance to go there any more.

The part of Canada, which he likes best, is the North, but he seldom gets a chance to go there any more.

The part of Canada which he likes best, is the North; but he seldom gets a chance to go there any more.

GROUP 3

I will tell you what really caused the problem—the weather in March and April was much colder than usual.

I will tell you what really caused the problem; the weather in March and April was much colder than usual.

I will tell you what really caused the problem: the weather in March and April was much colder than usual.

GROUP 4

Under these conditions (she was not well and was not able to study) it is not surprising that she had to drop the course.

Under these conditions, she was not well and was not able to study, it is not surprising that she had to drop the course.

Under these conditions (she was not well and was not able to study), it is not surprising that she had to drop the course.

GROUP 5

Apples, pears, peaches: these are fruit best grown in a temperate climate.

Apples, pears, peaches—these are fruit best grown in a temperate climate.

Apples, pears, peaches, these are fruit best grown in a temperate climate.

PART IV: READING COMPREHENSION

Instructions

Answer the question that accompanies each of the following five passages of prose.

PASSAGE 1

(1) It is hard for us to believe just what the bicycle meant to Canadians in the 1890s. (2) Here was everyone's dream—a speedy, pleasant means of travel available to people who could never afford a carriage and a team of horses. (3) Overnight Canada became a nation on wheels. (4) Bicycle clubs sprang up in every town and city. (5) The young kids peddled out to the country to go fishing. (6) Couples got out a bicycle-built-for-two, with extra carriers fore and aft for the youngsters, and peddled to the beach. (7) The man who wanted to prove his strength cycled a “century”, one hundred miles, in a single day—no mean feat over the roads of the times. (8) And after the drop frame was introduced to preserve feminine modesty, many women took to the sport, wearing knickers or long, baggy bloomers under their skirts.

Question

Which one of the eight sentences in the above passage is the topic sentence (the sentence that contains the main idea or argument) of the paragraph? Identify the sentence by the number in brackets.

Answer ()

PASSAGE 2

(1) The landmark in Garibaldi park, British Columbia, called 'Black Tusk' has an interesting 'twin' on the opposite side of the Pacific Ocean: 'The Pinnacles' in Rarotonga, Cook Islands, which are an exactly similar formation and also formed from extinct volcanoes. (2) The hot springs, one of the world-renowned features of New Zealand's North Island, have their 'twins' in coastal British Columbia at Harrison and in the Rocky Mountains. (3) The Ecuadorians, Peruvians, and Chileans experience a constant earthquake threat as do many Chinese, and all the Japanese, living on the other side of the Pacific. (4) Several active volcanoes have taken people's lives in Indonesia and on the Pacific coast of North America in the last twenty years. (5) These phenomena are all products of the vulcanism collectively called 'The Pacific Ring of Fire'.

Question

Which sentence is the topic (claim, thesis) sentence in the above passage? Identify the sentence by the number in brackets.

Answer ()

PASSAGE 3

(1) Two specific hints may help you to become better at revising your essays. (2) One is to let a day or so pass between writing your first draft and revising it. (3) In other words, revise tomorrow what you have written today. (4) It probably doesn't matter whether you use a pen, a pencil, a typewriter, or a word processor when you revise. (5) People who always write an essay the night before it is due, won't be able to take this advice about letting a day pass, but it's sound advice, anyway. (6) A second trick is to try reading your essay aloud while revising it. (7) Your ear will often tell you things about what you have written that your eye might have missed. (8) The ear, for example, is particularly good at isolating sentence fragments or picking out awkward combinations of words.

Question

Which of the eight sentences in the above passage *does not* directly contribute to the central idea being developed? Identify the sentence by the number in brackets.

Answer ()

PASSAGE 4

(1) Nobody talks simply *language*: we have to talk a *particular* language, such as English, Spanish, Chinese, or Ukrainian. (2) In fact, people don't just talk in their native tongue; they talk in a *dialect* of that language. (3) Several hundred millions of us talk English in one way or another; however, the Americans don't talk like the British or the Canadians, nor do the Canadians in Newfoundland talk like the Canadians in British Columbia. (4) Nobody, in fact, talks simply *English*—we have to talk one *dialect* or another. (5) Of course, there are snobbish people who think that what they talk is a so-called *pure* English, and that anything different is a dialect; and there are humble people who know that they talk a dialect, but believe that people that talk the language pure, are more fortunate. (6) Nevertheless, all qualified students on the subject now seem to agree that every language is composed exclusively of dialects. (7) They also agree that we are on pretty slippery ground if we argue that some dialects are linguistically better than others, though, of course, it is obvious that some do have more *prestige* than others.

Question

Which sentence is the topic (claim, thesis) sentence in the above passage? Identify the sentence by the number in brackets.

Answer ()

PASSAGE 5

- (1) The sea was the source of life to the peoples of the Northwest Coast of British Columbia. Their villages were oriented to it; food was sought within its depths and along its shoreline. The waters of the sea were the familiar highways they travelled in their strong canoes.

- (2) Of all the products of the sea, salmon was the most eagerly sought. Abundance of salmon determined the pattern of all life. The elaborate ceremonial and social entertainments so important to the people of this region were made possible by the surplus of dried and smoked fish which could be stored for the future. Abundance of salmon meant that the hard work of the fishing season could provide months of leisure time in which everyone could enjoy the entertainment of the winter ceremonies.

- (3) As salmon was the basic food, so was cedar basic to the material culture invented by the people of this coast. The clean, easily worked grain of the cedar made it the most versatile of materials. From this wood, Native craftsmen produced large houses, strong canoes, domestic utensils, and massive carvings. From the rootlets of the cedar tree, women wove a never-ending variety of baskets and textiles.

Write out the topic sentence of paragraph (1).

Paragraph (2) has **two** central ideas. Using *complete sentences*, identify the two ideas in this paragraph.

(a)

(b)

Paragraph (3) has one topic and two supporting ideas. Using *complete sentences*, identify the topic sentence and the two ideas in this paragraph.

(a) (topic sentence)

(b) (supporting idea)

(c) (supporting idea)

PART V: WRITING AN EXPOSITION

Instructions

Choose **one** of the topics below and write an expository essay of three or four paragraphs (about 300 words). Your writing will be assessed in terms of its choice of words, spelling, sentence structure, and punctuation. (Use a dictionary if you wish). We will also be evaluating your ability to communicate your thoughts clearly and effectively through good essay structure. You should begin your essay with an introductory statement or claim upon which your discussion is based. We will be looking to see how well your sentences and paragraphs are connected and organized. Content will be evaluated based upon how thoroughly you deal with the topic you have chosen. We do not expect a research paper. **Use your own words and ideas.** Don't forget to end your essay with some sort of conclusion.

Please supply your own paper for this writing exercise. Make sure you put your name on your writing sample.

TOPICS (choose one)

1. Write an essay about two different jobs you have had, one you liked and one you did not like.
2. Describe your community to someone who has never been there.
3. Explain, as if to an educational advisor, why you want to take TRU-OL courses.
4. Write an essay in which you tell the reader about some subject that you feel you really know something about.
5. Write an essay on your feelings about the different seasons of the year.

PART VI: WRITING A BUSINESS LETTER

Instructions

Using **one** of the situations outlined below, write an appropriate business letter. The body of your letter need only be about fifty (50) words long. Be sure to include in your letter the following customary parts:

- Your own address
- Address of the person you are writing to
- Date the letter was written
- Formal greeting or salutation
- Formal closing
- Your signature

Please supply your own paper for this writing exercise. Make sure you put your name on your writing sample.

SITUATIONS (choose one)

1. You recently bought from Omineca Radio Stores (860 Shore Avenue, Pleasantville, British Columbia, V1R 3T6) a car radio for which you paid \$189. The next day you received in your mail the store's flyer advertising the very same radio for \$139. Write to the store manager requesting a \$50 refund.
2. A friend has told you that the Outback Hotel (200 Riel Street, South Timmins, Ontario, P6N1A4) may be hiring additional summer help in the near future. Write to Charles Rodgers, the hotel's personnel manager, requesting information regarding the type of jobs that may be available and asking him how you might best apply.
3. Write a letter to Orange Quality Books (874 Hanover Street, Fredericton, New Brunswick, E5B 5H1) asking them to send you one of the following books, whichever is less expensive: *Walking to Miramichi* by John Broadfoot, or *Canoeing the St. John River* by Mary Watters. Point out that you would prefer to have the paperback edition of either book, although you will take the hardback copy if that is all that is available. Ask them to bill you for the book and mail it to you.